

StA--Draft CWP 2013, Vol. 1, Ch. 8 comments

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The need for a critical path analysis

Vol. 1, Ch. 8, provides a comprehensive exposition of Water Plan objectives and related actions, but its organization does not lend itself to an efficient and logical prioritization process. If climate change is upon us, which it very well might be, there needs to be a critical path analysis of the most direct route to long-term water resource sustainability. The State is already well-behind any construct of an optimum timeline. Random accomplishment of the plan's related actions, special-interest-influence based accomplishment of the related actions, or politically-oriented accomplishment of the related actions will divert limited resources and sap vital energy without timely accomplishment of the most important analyses, programs, and actions.

Embedded within 40+ pages of objectives and related actions are the critical elements needed to move the state toward a reliable water supply, but they cannot be easily winnowed out by reading the chapter, and they most certainly won't be winnowed out by the decision-makers who need them the most but have the least time to do so. Some of the voids in a critical path analysis of the road to a reliable water supply are:

- An estimate or range of estimates for how much water can be expected to be available under projected climate change;
- The probable pattern and timing of water availability under projected climate change;
- An estimate of sustainable yields from conjunctive management of North Valley aquifers;
- An estimate of how much additional statewide storage is needed and its location;
- An estimate of how much water must be allocated to the Delta estuary and on what schedule;
- A trade-off analysis of how to safely move water from north of the Delta to south of the Delta; and
- The data, modeling, and analytic capability to support the decision process.

In other words, the State has a Water Plan, but doesn't have a plan for managing its water. The consequence of not focusing clearly on these shortfalls is an activity trap of preoccupation with peripheral and parochial interests. It reminds one of the old saw, "If you don't know where you're going, any road will get you there."

In this observer's opinion, a major problem with putting together a passable water bond ballot measure is the lack of coherence, focus, and continuity among the projects generally or specifically proposed for funding. To most observers it just looks like a bunch of special interests maneuvering for government funding—with no clear connection to a long-term reliable water supply.

Recommendation: DWR should develop a logically sequenced critical path roadmap of the data, analyses, programs, and actions required to expeditiously move the state along an understandable road toward a long-term sustainable and reliable water supply—and include it in the 2013 update of the Water Plan.